

S H O C H I K U

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Kabuki Play.

"HIRAGANA SHISUIKI" (THE VICISSITUDES
OF LIFE COMPARED TO THE JAPANESE
CURSIVE SYLLABARY)

Genta Kando

----- Scene of Genta's Disinheritance -----

TO BE PRESENTED BY SOJURO AND SUMIZO TROUPE AT THE
MITSUKOSHI THEATER FROM JULY 4th TO

JULY '47

C.C.D. J-2039



"HIRAGANA SEISUIKI" (THE VICISSITUDES OF LIFE
COMPARED TO THE JAPANESE CURSIVE SYLLABARY)

Two Scenes

SYNOPSIS:

When the expeditionary forces sent from Kamakura destroyed the rebel Kiso-Yoshimaka and his troops, Kajiwaragenta-Kagesue competed with Sasaki so as to lead the van across the River Uji, but he was defeated by the latter in the competition and became disconsolate at his defeat.

On the other hand, he yielded to his worldly passions and returned home so as to take leave of his mother in a casual way when he was reviled by his younger brother Heiji Kagetaka because of his defeat in the match at the River Uji and his love affairs with Chidori. However, his mother Enju took pity on him and superficially disowned him and then, giving him an armour and some money let him leave the house together with Chidori.

S C E N E S :

FIRST SCENE ----- Scene of Kajiwara Heizo's residence

SECOND SCENE ----- Scene of the inner semi-detached room
of the same house.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE :

Kajiwara-Genta-Kagesue; Kajiwara-Heiji-Kagetaka;
Yokosuka Gunnai; Errand-boy Chinsai; Genta and Heiji's
Mother Enju; Waiting Maids: Chidori, Kiyono, Hisaei,
Yoshino, Masae, Shizuka and Uzue; Door-man; Page;
Errand-boy; Takemoto Troupe For Joruri (a ballad-drama)

---- FIRST SCENE -----

----- Scene of Kajiwara Heizo's Residence -----

The main stage is a flat stage.

In the middle there is a place of honour three feet
high.

On both sides of the front there is a doorway made of
paper screens. There are spread Korea-made mats all over.
The above represents the dwelling-house of Kajiwara Heizo,
a retainer of the House of Genji.

There are seated six waiting maids in a row.

With a harp song, the curtain rises.

Kiyono: Well, Hisae-dono, as requested by the mistress, arrange all the offerings and keep the paper sliding-doors closed; you must take care of them.

Hisae: Don't worry!

Since the mistress prohibits strangers from entering the room and keeps the articles, I know I have to handle them carefully.

Yoshino: I hear our lord was granted that armour from Kamakura-dono.

Masae: Our lord was granted such an excellent article by him in reward for his distinguished service, I suppose.

(From the next room comes out Shigarami decently.)

Shigarami: Oh, here you are, everybody. Just now Yokosuka Gunnai-sama returned from the City on an urgent business.

Kiyono: Well, then, I'll tell it to the mistress.

Hisae: Well, then, everybody, let's accompany her.

(The waiting maids leave.)

Gunnai: Excuse me, but I'm Yokosuka Gunnai and I've only just arrived here. Please tell her that I want to see her.

(Just then Chinsai comes out of the interior.)

Chinsai: Hallo, Gunnai-sama. Have you only just arrived here? Since the young master heard of your arrival from the waiting maids a while ago, he is expecting you wishing to hear the state of affairs of the River Uji from you.

I'll take you with me right away.

Gunnai: Well, I've also got something to tell Heiji-sama directly and please him. Take me there right away.

Chinsai: Well, then, Gunnai-sama.

Gunnai: Chinsai, I'll trouble you to take me there. (Is about to go. Just then over there a voice is heard: "The young master is back.")

Gunnai: Well, Genta-dono also seems to have arrived. However, I'll hand this letter to his mother first of all.

Come along, Chinsai.

"They enter the room together. In a twinkling a voice is heard at the front door."

Voice: He is back.

(All of them come out and meet him.)

"In response to the voice, Kajiwara Genta Kagekiyo, the most fashionable man in Kamakura, comes back from the River Ujigawa. He adjusts his ceremonial head-gear and sleeves formally."

(Just then Genta comes out over there.)

Genta: Now I (Genta Kagesure) am back. Tell mother of it. "He calmly passes and takes a seat when his mother's

voice is heard."

Enju: Has Genta come back, eh?

"She comes out."

(His mother Enju accompanied by waiting maids seems to be seated in front. The waiting maids rolls up the bamboo-blinds.)

Enju: Oh, Genta, I'm glad you've come back. I hear fortune has smiled on Lord Yoritomo and both Noriyori and Yoshitsune are also in good health, but I feel relieved to see you.

Genta: Well, as you know, Kiso committed a outrage, so we lost no time in suppressing him and his troops. Father is also fine. I'm glad to see you in good health, Mother.

"He respectfully congratulates his mother on her good health."

Enju: Say, Genta, I can't understand why you've been allowed to return home alone. Did your father leave any message for me?

Genta: Oh, no, he didn't.

He told me that I should return to Kamakura and ask mother of the circumstances, so I was obliged to obey his order and come back.

I wonder how he wrote to you, Mother.

"He is doubtful of it and asks his mother of it."

Enju: A while ago Gunnai handed me this letter.
If you feel uneasy about it, you'd better open
and read it.

"He breaks the seal and opens the letter. Meanwhile,
Chidori wishes to see the man of her heart whom
she loves inwardly."

(Just then Chidori comes out of the left.)

Chidori: Hallo, Genta-sama.

Even in normal times travelling is wearisome; I'm
afraid you've had a lot of trouble.

Haven't you become thin?

Aren't you sick?

Genta: Oh, I feel swell to hear your kind words.

When I left here, my younger brother Heiji was
ill, but did he recover from his illness?

Chidori: Yes; I'm troubled what with recovery from his
illness and what with his anger; he is too healthy,
I'm afraid.

Genta: That's good. Where is he? I'll see him.

(In less than no time, his younger brother's voice
is heard from one of the rooms.)

Heiji: Hallo, Brother, here is Heiji Kagetaka. I'll be
there right away and have an interview with you.

(Just then on the right Heiji's voice is heard.)

"He leaves his sick-bed and comes out courteously
wearing an unlined belt, ceremonial "haori" coat
and pleated skirt and a pair of large swords."

(Chinsai also comes out.)

Heiji: How do you do? I'm glad to see you in good health and hear our father also enjoys good health.

Although I've been confined in bed for my illness, I feel all right now and offer my congratulations for your returning home.

Genta: I'm glad you are also all right.

Heiji: Well, above all, what I should like to hear from you is whether you distinguished yourself at the competition of the River Uji though I suppose you did.

Genta: Well, I rendered a glorious deed at that competition.

Heiji: Glorious deed, eh?

Honorable deed?

Let me hear it.

Genta: If for future reference, I'll tell it to you.

Mother, allow me to sit on a stool.

(Just then from the left comes out a waiting maid with a pail made of vines in her hand.

Genta sits on it.)

Genta: Now I'll tell you of the competition. It was about the end of January (of the lunar calender) that Yoshitsune's twenty-five thousand cavalrymen ~~by~~ marched on the county of Uji in Yamashiro Province.

Owing to the melting snow on the mountains all around, that wide river rose till it covered Uji Bridge with the water.

On the other bank of the river there were compactly laid stakes and piles and five or six thousand warriors held themselves ready to shoot down with their bow and arrow anyone who dares to cross the river. Unless I had crossed the river at such a chance, I should have never distinguished myself, I thought. Thereupon I mounted a swift steed named Surusumi which I had been granted by our lord and drove it with might and main from Kojima-Ga-Saki, Tachibana. Following me, a horseman drove his horse.

Blown by the spring morning breeze from the river, the bells attached to the competing bridle-bits rang. I wondered who was the horseman and turned round. As written in the old poem, "through the haze rushed up a man on horseback."

It was Sasaki-No-Shiro "Takatsuna".

Our excellent horses were named Ikezuki and Surusumi respectively. We two cavalrymen started crossing the river.

(He tells the story proudly.)

Heiji: Indeed, Brother, up to now you've done very well, but from now on you'll have to talk about the result of the competition, so it will be hard for you to do so, I

suppose. Shall I talk about it in your place out of my brotherly affection?

"Chidori is displeased to hear his words."

Chidori: Tut, tut! You ought to listen to your elder brother's exploits without cutting him short.

Heiji: Don't take his part so much. I don't mind it a bit.
(Goes on to say.)

Now I'll talk about the consequences. Sasaki is an expert horseman while you're poor at horsemanship. After all you were defeated by Sasaki in respect of "equestrianism."

(Gesticulates.)

"No, no, no, no".

Chidori: You can't have been defeated by him; I guess the enemy "cast nets, large and small, crosswise at the bottom of the river "so as to prevent you from crossing the river on horseback."

You are a man of ready wit, Genta-Kagekiyo-sama.

"You drew your sword and crossed the river tall in the saddle cutting off the nets, large and small, I conjecture".

Genta: Right you are, Chidori. I cut off all the nets and on my horse won the race against Sasaki on his horse Ikezuki by about 12 yards.

Chidori: You see, he wasn't defeated by the rival, but he won the race. Genta-sama knows what he is about, I should say.

Heiji: Hm.

Chidori: Hem.

"I'm very happy to hear it and I feel relieved,"
says she.

(However, Heiji shakes his head.)

Heiji: I'll take Sasaki's place and will ask you a question.
Just then Takatsuna "shouted at the top of his voice."
Here, here, Genta-Kagesue-dono, your horse's
belly-band is loose. Be careful not to hurt
yourself when you fall from your horse.

Genta: Why do you know so much in detail about it?

(Just then Gunnai opens the paper screen on the right
and peeps in the room when he exchanges glances with
Genta.)

Hm, I happened to notice it, so I put the bowstring
in my mouth and placed my hands on the horse's belly-
band and "tightened it with all my strength."

Heiji: That's because he used such a trick and made a dupe
of you though the horse's belly-band wasn't loose.
Thereupon Sasaki took advantage of your unguarded moment
and "crossed the river tall in the saddle and cried:
I'm Sasaki-No-Shiro-Takatsuna of the direct line of
descent from the House of Genji of Omi Province.
Now I've led the van accross the River Uji."

Thus he rendered such a distinguished service while you were ~~put~~ to shame that much.

It's absolutely right, isn't it?

Genta: Well, well.

Heiji: It's true, isn't it?

Genta: Well.

Both: No, now, now.

Heiji: What do you say?

"He takes advantage of Genta's weakness and humiliates him. Genta keeps silent. Meanwhile, Chidori weeps in sympathy with him.

Kagetaka laughs scornfully at him."

Heiji: Serve you right!

Say, woman, the eldest son is overwhelmed with ~~xx~~ shame. Mother, just let me see the letter.

Enju: Don't be silly! This letter is addressed to me.

It's no concern of yours whatever may be written in it.

I won't let you see it.

Don't ^{push} ~~put~~ yourself forward sidestepping me ---- your mother.

"Her scolding voice is tearful as well. Again she repeats herself."

Heiji: Oh, you pampers your son too much.

As long as he lives, he is a discredit to his parents and brother. Say, weak-kneed man, what do you say to taking your life with your own hands?

I don't think you'll be able to, ^(he) I'll behead you and put an end to your life.

"He draws his sword and stabs at his elder brother, who wards it off and holds his hand tightly."

Genta: Behave yourself.

I'll admit I'm weak-kneed, but you ought to remember how strong I am.

"He unsheathes his sword and wards off younger brother's sword calmly when the younger brother knits his brows."

Heiji: Mother, please scold my elder brother; he is glaring at me.

"He runs off."

(As above-mentioned, he goes to the right with Chinsai.)

Genta: Say, Chidori, I've a private talk with mother.

Leave here for a while.

Chidori: Very well.

Genta: I say, you must go.

Chidori: Very well.

"Being scolded by him, she opens the paper screens and enters another room."

(Thereupon Chidori goes to the left with a heavy heart.)

"Looking round, Kagekiyo edges up to his mother."

Genta: From what I've said, I'm afraid you might think I spare my life. However, I've no intention to be saved my life. Before the match at Uji, my father Heizo-dono wanted to show his ability at the battle and without permission he shot his arrow at a target, but missed the mark and happened to hit the general's white flag, which was considered to be inauspicious to our forces.

My father had such a misfortune, so he couldn't make an excuse for it, and he was expected to commit "harakiri" (disembowel himself). However, Sasaki-No-Shiro kindly interceded with our lord for him and happily he was spared his life.

I wasn't on the spot and I was told of it later on, so I wanted to see Sasaki and express my thanks to him. However, before I had no chance to do so the battle had already started.

Not only I but also everybody wanted to lead the van across the River Uji. As ill luck would have it, both Sasaki and I were chosen to cross the river ahead of the others. Since my father owed his life to Sasaki, if I should have defeated him, I thought I should have been ungrateful to him, so I let him lead the van and perform a meritorious deed in return for his kindness to my father. Although I

was defeated by him, I had been resolved to do so and I didn't regret my humiliation nor did I want to save my life. Although I thought filial piety was superior to the honor of leading the van, I couldn't clearly speak of it because of our sincerity between us. I'll be willing to give up my life for my father. Good-bye, Mother.

"He puts his hand on the hilt of his sword.

Enju: Wait, Genta. You've a good excuse for it. Why didn't you tell your father of it?

Genta: If I had made the excuse, I would have brought Sasaki's exploit to naught. Mother, I was obliged to tell it only to you against my will, though. I hope you won't tell it to others.

Enju: Oh, it's your youthful idea. If you should die now, you would neither be devoted to your master nor dutiful to your father.

Genta: Excuse me, but I'm afraid you are wrong. If I die out of justice, I'll be both faithful to my lord and dutiful to my father.

Enju: No, you won't. The reason is this: The ancestor of the House of Kajiware was Bando-No-Hachiheiiji. Heizo-dono was named after the ancestor. You're his eldest son, so you ought to have been named Heita after your father. However, Shogun Minamoto Yoritomo was saved by Heizo-dono from his danger when he had

hidden himself behind a tree at Mt. Ishibashi and been exposed to danger. Since then he regarded Heizo-dono as his savior and you, the son of his retainer as his brother and giving you the first letter "Gen" of his surname, named you Genta.

Besides, he gave you an amour called Ubugi worn by the heir of the House of Genji, so he is your godfather. You ought to take this into consideration. If you lose your life, how could you be faithful to your parents and repay the kindness of your lord, namely, your godfather?

That's because you won't be able to realize your loyalty and filial piety.

Genta: Oh, I shan't forget his kindness. I feel awkward to call the lord my godfather.

The relation between lord and retainer will last in the three worlds of existence.

I'll die and be born again and then serve the lord so as to keep my samurai spirit.

(Again he takes up the sword.)

Enju: What a pity!

You may meet your master in the three worlds, but the relation between parents and children is limited to this world, so I won't be able to see you again in ~~the~~ another world, I'm afraid.

Both you who are going to die leaving me --- your mother behind and my husband who has sent a letter asking ~~w~~ me to kill you are unfeeling. Especially you're an admirable son. You are not only your father's son, but also mine --- your mother's son. Without asking you of the reason, he said in his letter that he would send here Gunnai to have him examine your body.

He is stubborn and hair-brained, I should say. I feel vexed even to see this letter.

"She tears the letter to pieces and bites them off in her mouth; she thinks ill of her husband and takes pity on her son and then bursts into tears out of her maternal love.

It's no wonder that she and her son are grief-stricken. Just then, Yokosuka-Gunnai comes forward without reserve".

(She gesticulates to express her sorrow and tears the paper and throws it away. From the right comes out Gunnai.)

Gunnai: Since you've read your father's letter, needless to say, you know I'll act as your coroner. Now, please commit harakiri, Genta-sama.

"He says so with a sullen look."

Genta: You needn't urge me to do so. I'm ready to do so. "He holds himself ready to do so when his mother checks him."

Enju: Oh, I won't let you commit harakiri like a samurai, you shameless coward.
Instead of carrying out your father's mild order, I'll chastise you more strictly as your mother.
Bring here an old wadded clothes, anyone.
Come on right away.
"In response to her calling voice, Heiji Kagetaka comes out with a rag."

Heiji: Well, mother, what are you going to do with this old wadded clothes?

Enju: Of course I'll disown Genta, take his pair of swords away from him, let him change his clothes to the old wadded clothes and drive him away from the gate.

Heiji: Oh, do you mean to say that you'll take his pair of swords away from him and let him put on the old wadded clothes and eject him from the gate? Serve him right! Gunnai, laugh at his condition.

Gunnai: That's a good idea.

Chinsai: What do you say to laughing at him alphabetically?

Heiji: Indeed it'll be more amusing to do so.

Gunnai: It's a swell idea to laugh at him alphabetically.

Chinsai: Please take the initiative, sir.

Heiji: A, B.

Gunnai: C, D.

Chinsai: E, F.

Heiji: G, H.

Chinsai: Ha, ha!

Three: Ha, ha, ha!

"All of them burst out laughing. Genta feels mortified at his shame and sobs.

His mother wishes to save her son's life and intentionally makes a long face in deference to the others."

Enji: Oh, everybody, you're laughing at his condition, so I also feel like laughing at it.

I can't help laughing so much that I shed tears.

Ha, ha, ha, ha!

"She laughs loudly against her will."

Say, Heiji, Genta's disinheritance will be an advice to you as well. Listen to me!

If you are sorry for your shame, you must also attack the western province and destroy the Heike family and be of service to your lord because of your meritorious deed. If so, I won't disown you, you see.

Heiji: I see, I see.

Enju: Well, Heiji, you must keep my words in mind.

"She drops the elder brother a hint so as to encourage him though she seems to give the younger brother a good talking-to.

Genta is moved to tears because of his mother's mercy and keeps on weeping with his face on the mat.

Heiji Kagetaka looks triumphant."

Heiji: Oh, don't take so much time about it. Say, warriors, strip my elder brother Genta of his clothes and let him put on this old wadded clothes

and then turn him away from the gate.

Warriors: Very well.

"In reply to his voice, warriors come out and surround his elder brother."

(Just then from the left come out three warriors.)

Warriors: Now, stand up, please.

"They surround his elder brother. Now Kagesue resigns himself to fate and thinking of his mother's mind, goes along the long passage with a heavy heart."

(Driven away by the four warriors, Genta goes to the left.)

"As soon as Chidori hears of the news, she runs out."

(Just then Chidori comes out of the left and weeps.)

Chidori: His Mother is shallow-minded, I'm afraid.

Victory or defeat is inevitable in battle; everybody has such a bitter experience. Although his father wrote to her asking for his death, she disinherited him and will eject him without pleading for him.

This is indeed a case of like father like mother."

Since Genta-sama has been hated by both of his parents, he is at his wit's end, I'm afraid.

Now, forgive him, "please.

She prostrates herself and weeps so as to plead for him."

(She gesticulates.)

Heiji: Here, here, Chidori, there is no use crying over spilt milk.

From now on you'd better give up my elder brother and obey me. If so, I'll ask my mother to let you become my wife.

Chidori: Tut, tut! I don't want to listen to you. A bad thing never dies. I won't obey you.

Heiji: Nope of your cheek! Say, Mother, Chidori is guilty of immoral conduct. She has fallen in love with Genta-dono.

Enju: Do you mean to say that Chidori is in love with Genta?

Gunnai: Ha, ha! I know she has long been in love with him, so she is guilty of immoral conduct and unsuitable for working in this house, I should say.

Enju: What a loose woman you are! You're precocious for your age. Chidori, come on!

"Gunnai pushes Chidori away to Enju."

(The sound of the wooden clappers is heard. All of them leave in deep thought.)

----- Dark change -----

SECOND SCENE

----- Scene of the Inner Semi-detached Room of
the Same House -----

The main stage is a double stage three feet high. The real eaves and roof are attached to it. On both sides there are rooms with paper sliding-doors. In the room on the left there is displayed an armour with its box beside it. On the right there is a wicket. The above represents the inner semi-detached room of the same house.

The stage-settings are placed in their proper positions.

"The toll of the evening bell is heard. The moon goes behind the clouds. In contrast to Kagesue's bright wadded silk garment of brocade, he is obliged to wear the cotton wadded clothes and unlined belt. Poor thing! He is in rags."

(Just then from the right comes out Genta wearing the old wadded clothes and a rope instead of a belt. Following him, Gunnai and Chinsai come out.)

Gunnai: From now on I'll act as his coroner as ordered by our master. He cannot live out in such a shameful condition. He ought to die on this spot.

Chinsai: Excuse me, Gunnai-sama, but I don't think he can die, because he is anxious about the matter.

He won't be able to die here, I can assure you.

Gunnai: Well, then, I'll put an end to his life.

(Gunnai looks at Genta going slowly to the stage passage and stabs at him suddenly. ♫ Chinsai also goes to the stage passage.)

Genta: Wait, Gunnai!

Gunnai: Very well.

Genta: Where are you going?

Gunnai: Just goin' to this neighborhood.

Genta: Gunnai, you're my father's messenger, ain't you?

Gunnai: Yes, I'm his messenger.

Genta: If you're his messenger, I shan't be able to kill you.

Gunnai: Right you are! You won't be able ♫ to kill me, I should say.

(Just then Genta picks up the sword which Gunnai has dropped.)

Genta: Gunnai, whose sword is this?

Gunnai: Well, let me see.

Genta: Come here and look closely at this.

Gunnai: Excuse me.

Genta: I say, you look closely at this.

Gunnai: Okay. (Looks at the sword) Hm, this is mine.

Genta: With one's sword one's own head.

Gunnai: With one's sword one's own head.

Genta: Dropping is the natural consequence of one's own deed.

Gunnai: Dropping is the natural consequence of one's own deed.

Genta: Genta won't kill, you.

Gunnai: You're merciful, so you won't kill me.

Genta: But my hands are moving against my will.

Gunnai: Heavens!

"In a twinkling, his head and body become separated from each other."

(Genta kills Gunnai.)

Genta: Although I had ^{made} ~~make~~ up my mind to commit "harakiri" in the battle-field, I returned home to see my mother once and away in spite of my dishonor, but she disowned me out of her kindness.

Her words spoken to my younger brother suggest her advice to me.

According to her advice, I'll take part in the battle against the Heike family and till the end of Shikoku and Kyushu "I'll run down the enemy and then render a distinguished service when I shall see her again.

He resigns himself to his fate and starts going out."

(Thereupon he is about to go.)

"His mother's voice is heard from behind him."

Enju: If you go to the front at the Shikoku-Kyushu area without a coat of mail, you won't be able to distinguish yourself, I'm afraid. Here is placed the armour called Ubugi (clothes for a new-born babe) granted to you from Lord Yoritomo in celebration of your birthday.

Since it is yours, nobody will have an objection to your
~~and~~ taking it away. Won't you step in?

This armour belongs to nobody in this house.

Come on, waiting-maids!

"Calling waiting-maids, she leaves."

Genta: Thank you for your compassion on me.

Thank you very much.

"He steps in the room and takes up the armour when to
his great surprise he sees the waiting-maid Chidori
there".

(Just then from within the box for the armour comes
out Chidori.)

Chidori: Hallo, Genta-sama.

Genta: Oh, you're Chidori.

Why are you here?

(Thereupon both of them draw near to each other.)

Chidori: This is also an evidence of your mother's mercy.

She said to me: "On a charge of your illicit love,
I'll put you in this box and examine you closely there
and then dismiss you, so you may go anywhere with him."
In token of your disinheritance, she gave you this pair
of swords out of her mercy.

Genta: Did she, eh?

Chidori: Yes.

Genta: Oh, boy! How kind she is! If I should think ill of her, Heaven would inflict punishment on me.
Right now I'll go to the battlefield and clear myself of the dishonor there.

Chidori: However, I'm anxious about your mother.

Genta: She will enjoy her health.

Both: We hope.

(Both of them are lost in thought.)

"They pray for the mother's happiness placing their hands together and shed tears for parting from her. Both he and Chidori go out tearfully, but they come back again.

He turns round when he exchanges glances with his mother."

"Just then the paper sliding-doors on the right are thrown open when his mother Enju with a hand-lamp in her hand shows up and calls them back."

Enju: Wait a moment.

Both: Certainly.

(Enju throws a paper package of money to them. Both of them are glad to see it and pick it up respectfully.

"They part from her wistfully and sorrowfully. This may be the way of the world."

(The three are in deep thought and overwhelmed with grief.

The sound of the wooden clappers is heard.)